Applicant : Gilby et al.
Serial No. : 09/575,283
Filed : May 22, 2000
Page : 6 of 8

Attorney's Docket No.: 10235-047001

REMARKS

Claims 29-48 are pending in this application, with claims 29 and 39 being independent. Independent claims 29 and 39 have been amended. No new matter has been added by way of this amendment. Favorable reconsideration and further examination is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following comments of the Applicants, which are preceded by related comments of the Examiner in small bold type:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4.   Claims 29-48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anderson et al, US 6,078,892 in view of Griggs, "Give us leads! Give us leads!"

As per claim 29, Anderson et al teaches configuring a lead processing system, including accepting a specification of a plurality of users of the system (column 2, lines 54-59 - the agent submits preferences of the type of customer requested), and accepting a specification of a plurality of rules for determining at least one action of the lead processing system with respect to the users, the rules being based on attributes of the users (column 7, lines 53-65 - distinct rules include a second step wherein the leads are delegated to an agent based upon product of interest, or preferences such as age range, location, sex, etc, inherently this information, i.e., age, location, sex, etc., reflects attributes of the users since the agent must specify their interest in working with clients holding these attributes; in addition at column 8, lines 1-6 the user can specify a max number of leads to be output from the search, this is also reflective of an attribute of the user); accepting at least one customer lead (column 8, lines 64-67 - the customer lead is selected); routing the at least one customer lead through the lead processing system in accordance with the rules (column 3, lines 17-39 - the customer leads are matched to the agent based on customer information and preferences set by the agent; column 7 - customer descriptive information is used to match the agent with the appropriate customer to pursue, this can be based on location, age, sex, type of business, etc.). Anderson et al does not explicitly teach tracking and reporting an advancement of the at least one customer lead through the lead processing system. Griggs teaches the use of an automated lead-management system that allows one to track leads from its inception to close (page 2, paragraph 7). Since both Anderson et al and Griggs both teach a customer lead system wherein leads are routed through a system to the appropriate user, it would have been obvious to modify Anderson et al to include a tracking system. This would allow the user to create revenue and manufacturing forecasts and also to evaluate return on investment for different lead-generation programs.

Amended independent claim 29 is directed to a method for processing customer leads that includes configuring a lead processing system. This configuring includes accepting a specification of users of the system and accepting a specification of rules for determining at least one action of the lead processing system with respect to the users. The rules include rules being based on attributes of user relationships. The method also includes accepting one or more customer leads and routing the leads through the lead processing system in accordance with the rules. The method also includes tracking and reporting an advancement of the one or more customer leads through the lead processing system.

In response to the Applicant's reply filed 22 May 2005, the Examiner asserts that Griggs teaches lead selectivity based on the attributes of user performing the search. In particular, the Examiner states that by merely specifying a criteria to search customer leads, attributes of the user influence the selection. Without conceding to the Examiner's position and in the interest of advancing prosecution, independent claims 29 and 39 have been amended such that the rules of the lead processing system include "rules being based on attributes of user relationships".

The applied art is not understood to disclose or to suggest features of amended independent claim 1. For example, the art is not understood to disclose or to suggest "rules being based on attributes of user relationships", as required by claim 29.

Anderson is understood to describes a method for retrieving customer lead information from a marketing database such that the best customer leads for one or more products of interest (col. 2, lines 42-46). To retrieve particular lead information, parameters associated with used to search the stored lead information. When a match is detected between the parameters and the lead information, the information is output to the user (see col. 8, lines 26-48). However, Anderson appears silent in regards to applying "rules being based on attributes of user relationships".

Accordingly, Anderson fails at least to disclose or to suggest each and every limitation of amended independent claim 29.

For at least this reason, amended independent claim 29 is believed to be patentable. Amended independent claim 39 includes limitations that are similar to those described above

Applicant : Gilby et al.
Serial No. : 09/575,283
Filed : May 22, 2000
Page : 8 of 8

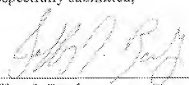Attorney's Docket No.: 10235-047001

with respect to claim 29 and is also believed to be allowable for at least the same reasons noted above.

Each of the dependent claims is also believed to define patentable features of the invention. Each dependent claim partakes of the novelty of its corresponding independent claim and, as such, has not been addressed specifically herein.

Please apply all charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050, referencing Attorney Docket No. 10235-047001.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: _Oct. 10, 2006_

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